

Date Mailed
July 30, 1998

BEFORE THE
PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION OF WISCONSIN

Petition of Customers of the Nichols Exchange of
GTE North Incorporated for Extended Area Service
With the Appleton Exchange of Ameritech-Wisconsin

2180-TV-120

**NOTICE OF REOPENING AND FURTHER INVESTIGATION
AND REQUEST FOR DATA**

On March 9, 1995, the Commission received a petition from approximately 170 customers of the Nichols exchange of GTE North Incorporated (GTE). The petition requested Extended Area Service (EAS) with the Appleton exchange, which is served by Ameritech-Wisconsin (Ameritech). For long distance billing purposes, the distance between Nichols and Appleton is 22 miles so this route is not covered by the Extended Community Calling (ECC) plan ordered by the Commission in 1993¹. The Nichols exchange lies mostly in northern Outagamie County; Appleton is the seat of Outagamie County government. Nichols and Appleton are in the Northeast LATA.

GTE and Ameritech provide intraLATA equal access at Nichols and Appleton, respectively. Currently, traffic on the Nichols-Appleton route is toll, or long distance. Toll carriers serving this route bill their customers toll rates and pay access charges to the local utilities for originating and terminating calls. GTE and Ameritech also carry toll traffic on this route. The petition sought to have this traffic converted to local traffic, which would not be subject to competition from toll providers. If converted to local service (EAS), calls from Appleton to Nichols would be charged for on a per call basis under Ameritech tariffs, and calls from Nichols to Appleton would, at customer option, be either per call or part of flat rate service, per GTE's rate schedule.

Under the rules for EAS (ch. PSC 167, Wis. Adm. Code), the cost of new EAS would be imposed on all customers in the subject exchanges regardless of their usage. Under ECC pricing, customers pay usage-sensitive rates (five cents per minute), so that users of the service cover a significant portion of its costs. In the original notice in this proceeding, dated April 25, 1995, the Commission stated that it was unlikely to approve additional EAS, and the petition was investigated to consider only ECC for this route. ECC was denied by the Commission on December 7, 1995.

¹ ECC arrangements apply between exchanges located in the same LATA, when the two exchanges have a common boundary or are within 15 miles of each other as measured for long distance billing. ECC rates - commonly 5 cents per minute- are lower than standard long distance rates.

The Commission has received renewed customer interest in converting the calling from Nichols to Appleton to local service.

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Commission will reopen its investigation of this matter. The reopened proceeding will focus on the request for EAS under ch. PSC 167, Wis. Admin. Code. In this way, the customers will determine whether EAS, at rates to be determined, is feasible and desirable.

To commence this further investigation, GTE shall submit a study of the traffic from Nichols to Appleton in accordance with § PSC 167.06, Wis. Admin. Code, within 30 days of the date of this Notice.

This is a Type III action under § PSC 4.10 (3), Wis. Admin. Code. No unusual circumstances suggesting the likelihood of significant environmental consequences have come to the Commission's attention. Neither an environmental impact statement under § 1.11, Stats., nor an environmental assessment is required.

Questions on this matter may addressed to Tom Gross, Principal Telecommunications Analyst, Telecommunications Division at (608) 267-2337.

Dated at Madison, Wisconsin, _____

By the Commission:

Lynda L. Dorr
Secretary to the Commission

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